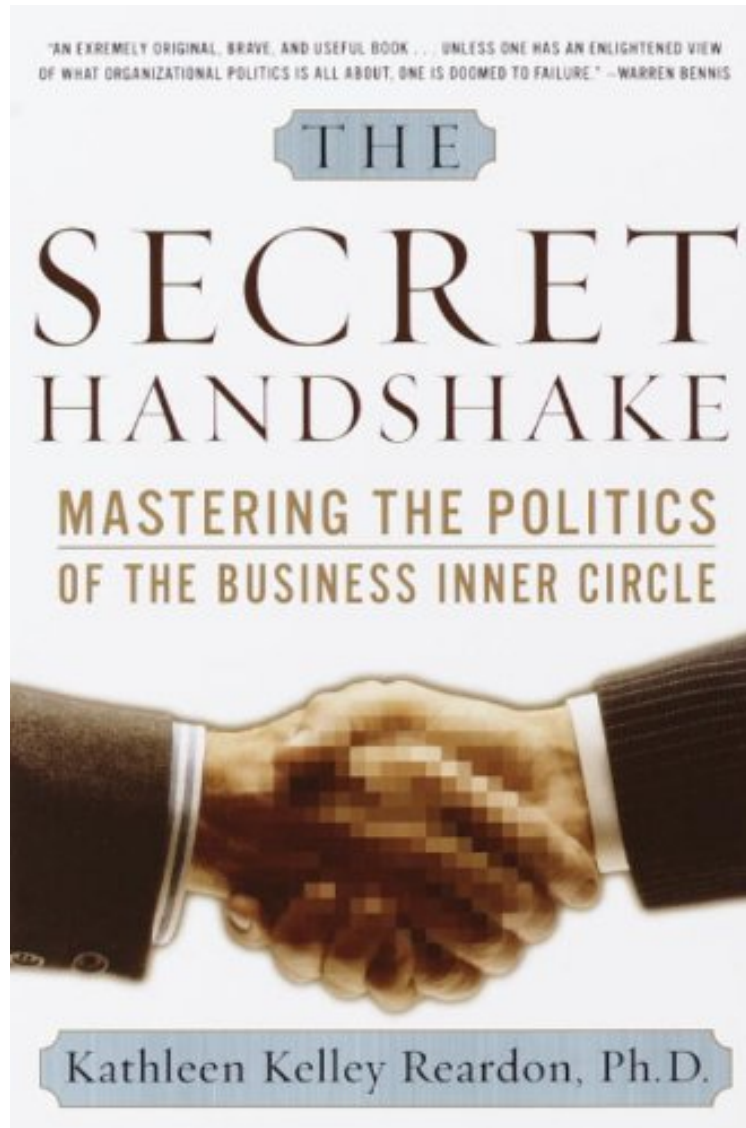


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# The Secret Handshake: Mastering the Politics of the Business Inner Circle

*Kathleen Kelly Reardon*

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**Kathleen Kelly Reardon : The Secret Handshake: Mastering the Politics of the Business Inner Circle** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Secret Handshake: Mastering the Politics of the Business Inner Circle:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Where has this book been all my life? By Jeffrey Deutsch Kathleen Kelley Reardon credits her parents for having jump-started her political skills. Now, those of us who didn't pick such a knowledgeable family to grow up in can read this book. Simply written and mainly jargon-free (with explanations for

the jargon she does use), it's accessible to the educated layperson. Dr. Reardon shows that while political skill is not \*sufficient\* for success, above a certain level it is generally \*necessary\*. She also shows that politics is more necessary in some places than in others -- which can save your sanity if you just thought all organizations were just plain political. (Not to mention, what the right political move is for any given situation varies very much between organizations, because among other things each group has its own culture. That's why you often need mentors wherever you are.) In a nutshell, politics is about personal interaction. So Dr. Reardon gives you many different tools for understanding yourself, understanding others and managing how you deal with each person. For example, she repeatedly emphasizes relating your ideas to what the other person is specifically talking about. She also includes help with gender communication -- important both for women on the rise and men who either currently deal with them or will do so. (Pretty much most women and most men, respectively!) Dr. Reardon does what it takes to give those who need it a heads-up: "As the politically astute know, speaking up before you know how others in a room think is naive. Many competent people fail to reach their potential because they can't get this simple fact through their heads. They convince themselves that their ideas aren't enthusiastically adopted because they're surrounded by imbeciles. They don't realize who the real imbecile is, politically speaking." The beauty of Dr. Reardon's approach is that it neatly spans from overall objectives to strategy to tactics. For example, you learn (1) that strategic compliments can be a good idea to let everyone know that you don't hold grudges, (2) how to make them credible by weaving them into conversations and (3) how to make them more direct or subtle by saying, for example, either "Jim did a great job on the marketing, really boosting our sales" or "Our sales have skyrocketed thanks to Jim's great work on the marketing" (that is, by placing the person's name either at the beginning or in the middle or end of the compliment). This is really Part I of a two-part series, Once you read and digested this book, check out *It's All Politics: Winning in a World Where Hard Work and Talent Aren't Enough* to take your political skills to the next level!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Worth to read it  
By Stepan K  
If you work in office it make sense to read this book to be aware of what is going behind of scene. It is going in people physiology and way people manipulate each other. This is not Carnegie style book how to trick customer to sale something. It is more about how to behave properly in corporate environment and how to read properly word and non-word messages. I would recommend this book.

22 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Good Book. Nasty Subject  
By John Galt  
I've noticed a wide variation of reviews, with most of the negative reviewers unable to separate the book and the subject. Office politics IS a distasteful activity...it wastes time and prevents many skilled workers from getting the rewards they deserve. But--as the author herself notes, it is here to stay, so either arm yourself or be robbed. I have read a number of office politics/OB books. What sets Reardon's book apart from the others is the following:--Self-evaluation tests...of your workplace and your personal style. Knowing yourself is the first step to optomizing yourself.--Relevant anecdotes...Reardon is an academic, and academic politics is really the second worst out there (the military is the worst). Furthermore, her experience as a consultant means she sees more politics in a year than most of us will see in a career.--She covers all aspects of the game. When to fight, when to give in, how to make up, how to build bridges, how to recognize barriers. This is a good overview of a nasty, brutish subject. Was it useful? Ask me in five years, when I'll have either made it or not.

In *The Secret Handshake*, top corporate consultant and USC management professor emerita Kathleen Reardon explores and reveals the hidden rules on the ins and outs of corporate politics that you won't find outlined in any employee handbook. Based on hundreds of candid interviews with executives at Fortune 500 companies who have achieved their goals and joined the inner circle, *The Secret Handshake* lays bare the unstated conventions that govern and shape corporate hierarchies. Taking readers inside boardrooms to learn firsthand how the top decision-makers view and assess the employees under them, it offers invaluable advice on such career-building tactics and skills as getting noticed, networking, persuading others, knowing which battles to fight, and mastering the art of the quid pro quo. For all those who aspire to be part of the decision-making body of their organization, *The Secret Handshake* is the ultimate intelligence report on whom to trust and whom to watch out for, how to manage the inevitable conflicts that will arise, and how to read between the corporate lines. Shortly after its release, the hardcover edition of *The Secret Handshake* reached Number 2 of the most popular Nonfiction Bestsellers among Amazon.com customers.

From Booklist  
Reardon, an academic and business consultant, describes her book as a journey to help the reader become better informed, better armed, more confident, and considerably more adept at mastering the interpersonal politics of work. In her view, political savvy is a prerequisite for the inner circle, even more so than job competence. Through information gleaned from hundreds of interviews of CEOs, senior managers, and high achievers during her 20 years of consulting, she explains the role of politics in organizations and provides ideas for gaining admission to the inner circle. Topics covered by the author include knowing your political style and when to change it, forming relationships the politically savvy way, the art of conversational politics, creating positional power, and managing conflict and cultivating influence. Although many will not agree with all of the author's theories and advice, she is probably correct when she states that politics is the way things work in most organizations. This book is thought provoking and offers valuable insight. Mary Whaley  
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